United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1407
4 June 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of United Nations Charter, authorizes UNPROFOR to use force in reply to attacks against safe areas or humanitarian convoys by any Bosnian party; extends mandate of UNPROFOR to strengthen peace-keeping functions; affirms that safe areas are "temporary measure".

+ Prince Sihanouk says he is no longer able to form and preside over Supreme National Council with Prince Ranariddh and Mr. Hun Sen as vice-presidents; UNTAC to continue to work for "new mechanism" until constitutional government established.

+ Alioune Blondin Beye of Mali to succeed Margaret Anstee as Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola at end of June.

+ Mass rape in Bosnia demonstrates women still "the spoils of war", UNIFEM Director tells UNDP Governing Council.

+ Secretary-General, on second day of Algeria visit, meets with Algerian Ministers and with Secretary-General of POLISARIO; stresses need for speedy implementation of Security Council resolution 809 on Western Sahara and presents proposals to POLISARIO.

+ Greece states its readiness to begin direct talks with former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, under Secretary-General's auspices, to solve dispute over name of new State.

+ United Nations observer mission on Uganda side of Rwanda/Uganda border would cost $8.5 million for initial six months; amount includes cost of technical mission to both countries in April, Secretary-General says.

+ Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to meet at Headquarters from 7 to 18 June; will consider report on follow-up to UNCED and ways to promote space technology for environmental protection and sustainable development.

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The Security Council decided today to ensure full respect for the six Bosnian towns designated as safe areas under resolution 824 (1993) and authorized the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to use force in reply to bombardements or attacks against those areas or deliberate obstruction of protected humanitarian convoys by any of the parties.

The Council took that action by adopting resolution 836 (1993) by a vote of 13 in favour with two abstentions (Pakistan and Venezuela).

By the resolution, the Council affirmed that the safe areas were a "temporary measure" and that the primary objective remained to reverse the consequences of the use of force and to allow all displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina to return to their homes in peace. That should begin with the "prompt" implementation of the provisions of the Vance/Owen plan in areas where agreement had been reached by the parties directly concerned.

In order to enable UNPROFOR to deter attacks against the Bosnian towns of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Goradze, Bihac, and Srebrenica, the Council decided to extend the Force's mandate and asked the Secretary-General to make the necessary adjustment, reinforcement or redeployment of UNPROFOR in consultation with the troop-contributing Governments. Under its new mandate, UNPROFOR would also monitor the cease-fire, promote the withdrawal of military or paramilitary units other than those of the Bosnian Government, occupy some key points on the ground and assist in the delivery of humanitarian relief.

United Nations Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, were allowed under the resolution to use airpower in and around the safe areas, under the authority of the Security Council and in close coordination with UNPROFOR, in support of the peace-keeping and humanitarian efforts.

The Council invited the Secretary-General to report on the modalities and the financial implications of its decision, within seven days, and emphasized that it would keep open other options for new and tougher measures, none of which were prejudged or excluded from consideration.

In a statement before the vote, Muhamed Sacirbey, the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations, said that by offering its protection to only the towns specifically designated as safe areas; by effectively restricting the Government's right, through a continuing arms embargo, to defend areas not designated as safe areas; and by allowing the situation to go on for an indefinite period, with no programme for real peace, the Security Council had at least implicitly declared an open season on the unfortunate majority of Bosnian towns and citizens, who did not happen to fall into safe areas.

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Prince Norodom Sihanouk today informed the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) that he was no longer able to form and preside over a Supreme National Council, with Prince Ranariddh [his son] and Mr. Hun Sen as vice-presidents. Yesterday, Prince Sihanouk had said that he was forming a new government which would bring together the Front Uni National pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif (FUNCINPEC) and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

UNTAC spokesman Eric Falt stressed today in Phnom Penh that "a new mechanism" was needed until a Constitution had been drawn up and formally adopted by the elected representatives of the people, and a new government established on that basis. Prince Sihanouk had offered to lead such an arrangement yesterday, he said.

UNTAC greatly valued the role of Prince Sihanouk who had demonstrated again and again his commitment to national reconciliation, Mr. Falt said. The Cambodians had clearly shown that they wanted him at the centre of their national life. In the transitional period, it was natural that arrangements were sougth to avoid conflict, and it was critical that the Prince be at the heart of the solution. UNTAC would continue to assist the search for this "mechanism" bearing in mind the result of the election, he said.

Almost 3,800,000 valid ordinary ballots have been counted since the election ended last Friday. FUNCINPEC has received 45.3 per cent of the valid votes, while the CPP has received 38.7 per cent.

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Alioune Blondin Beye, a former Foreign Minister of Mali, will succeed Margaret J. Anstee as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, a United Nations spokesman said today. Mr. Beye will take up the position at the end of this month.

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The Director of the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has said that the mass rape of Bosnian women as a form a warfare, demonstrating that women were still "the spoils of war", was only the most recent manifestation of the general abuse of women.

Ms. Sharon Capeling-Alakija told the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme that ethnic and religious conflicts, in developed and developing countries alike, too often made women the primary victims of violence. None are so vulnerable as refugee women, for whom beatings and rape are often the daily norm. Silence about such violence, as well as the silence surrounding such abuses as involuntary circumcision, sexual trafficking and domestic violence, needed to be broken, she said.

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Ms. Capeling-Alakija said UNIFEM believed that only if women were secure from abuse and enjoyed the rights of all human beings -- political, social and economic -- could they participate in and benefit from development. UNIFEM was a symbol of women's solidarity across national boundaries, party lines and the distinctions of race and class, she concluded.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on his second day in Algeria, visited the Rabouni refugee camp and held talks with Algeria's Defence and Foreign Ministers, and with the Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO), Mohamed Abdel-Aziz.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali impressed on Mr. Abdel-Aziz the importance of speedy implementation of Security Council resolution 809 (1993), which urged the parties concerned with Western Sahara to cooperate with him towards a referendum on self-determination for the Territory. The Secretary-General presented a set of compromise proposals to the POLISARIO leadership which he had also presented to officials in Morocco during his visit to that country. He asked POLISARIO to respond as soon as possible to the proposals to enable him to submit a report to the Security Council before the end of June.

The Secretary-General was scheduled to leave Algeria for Tunisia after briefing the Algerian Foreign Minister on his meeting with the POLISARIO leaders.

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Greece has stated its readiness to begin direct talks with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia under the auspices of the Secretary-General with the aim to achieve a lasting and viable solution to the dispute over the name of the new State. During the past couple of months, the two parties have been holding proximity talks to work out an agreement that would be a basis for establishing good neighbourly relations between the two States.

In a statement issued by George D. Papoulias, Ambassador and Special Envoy, the Greek Government said that, "in a spirit of genuine compromise", it had suggested the adoption of the name "Slavomakedonija". The name "Nova Makedonija" proposed by Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, who have been chairing the talks between the two countries, created "serious difficulties to Greece", the statement said. Greece was aware of the urgent need for a speedy conclusion of the process, the statement said. However, the main issue, namely the name, had not been settled and threatened to perpetuate the existing tensions and frictions in the region.

The statement was transmitted by the Secretary-General in a letter to the President of the Security Council, 28 May.

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The Secretary-General has estimated that it would cost about $8.5 million to set up a United Nations observer mission on the Uganda side of the Rwanda/Uganda border for an initial six months. That amount would include the cost of a technical mission sent to both countries in April, he said in an addendum to his report to the Security Council dated 20 May.

That report said that the deployment of United Nations observers would underscore the international community's interest in peace and security in the region. It would also show support for peace talks between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) taking place in Arusha, Tanzania. Both Rwanda and Uganda had asked for a United Nations presence on their common border, but the RPF had opposed a deployment on the Rwanda side.

In the addendum, the Secretary-General recommended that the proposed mission's costs should be a United Nations expense to be borne by Member States, and that assessments levied should be credited to a special account to be set up for the purpose.

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The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space will hold its two-week session at Headquarters beginning on 7 June. It will consider a report by the Secretariat on its role in implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held last June in Rio de Janeiro. Among the items to be discussed will be ways in which the Committee might promote the use of space technology for environmental protection and sustainable development.

The Committee will also review the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE II), and spin-off benefits of space technology. In addition, it will consider reports on the work of its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and its Legal Subcommittee.

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